DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 411 633 EC 305 823

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TITLE	Collaborative Planning between General and Special Educators. Final Report.
INSTITUTION	Alabama Univ., Tuscaloosa.
SPONS AGENCY	Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1997-03-31
NOTE	14p.
CONTRACT	H023B50063
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Secondary Education; *Inclusive Schools; *Learning Disabilities; Mainstreaming; Models; Questionnaires; *Regular and Special Education Relationship; Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Collaboration; Teacher Expectations of Students; *Teacher Student Relationship; *Team Teaching

ABSTRACT

A study investigated the effectiveness of a structured, collaborative co-planning model. Participants were 28 general education and special education teachers, who participated in extant team or co-teaching arrangements in grades 4-12 general education classes. The model was designed to increase: (1) the number of instructional interventions generated and implemented by general and special education teachers for students with learning disabilities included in the general education classroom; (2) the on-task classroom behavior of students with learning disabilities; (3) the number of positive interactions between general and special educators and their students with learning disabilities; (4) the number of positive interactions among students with disabilities and their peers; and (5) the general and special education teachers' perceptions of positive academic achievements of students with learning disabilities. Although data analysis from the study is ongoing, initial results suggest major implications for local education agencies' personnel in the planning and implementation of inclusive school or collaborative programs in which general and special educators team or co-teach. Student outcomes were not statistically significant. However, an analysis of preliminary results of transcripts from teachers' exit interviews indicates that teachers who used the collaborative co-planning form reported that it facilitated their instructional planning. An appendix includes survey instruments. (Author/CR)

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STUDENT INITIATED RESEARCH
CFDA 84.023B

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING BETWEEN GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATORS

PR/AWARD NUMBER HO23B50063

Final Report
March 31, 1997

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COLLABORATIVE BETWEEN GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATORS

ABSTRACT

An increasing number of students with disabilities are being included in the general education classroom. It is likely, with special education litigation throughout the country as well as mounting pressure from groups supporting inclusion, that more students with disabilities will receive instructional services in general education settings. In response to this impetus, many school systems are moving toward alternative educational programs such as collaborative teaching arrangements (e.g., co-teaching, team-teaching) between general and special educators. However, difficulties inherent in collaborative or co-planning (e.g., scheduling conflicts, philosophical differences, teaching styles, teaching roles) between educators involved in collaborative teaching arrangements can create a negative impact on programs designed to facilitate the needs of students with learning disabilities who are included in general education classrooms. The purpose of this project was to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured co-planning model designed to (a) increase the number of instructional interventions generated and implemented by general and special education teachers for students with learning disabilities included in the general education classroom, (b) increase the on-task classroom behavior of students with learning disabilities, (c) increase the number of positive interactions between general and special educators and their students with learning disabilities, (d) increase the number of positive interactions among students with disabilities and their peers, and (e) increase the general and special education teachers' perceptions of positive academic achievement of students with learning disabilities. Twenty-eight general and special education teachers from two local education agencies (LEAs) as well as twenty-eight of their students with learning disabilities participated in the project. These general and special education teachers were involved in extant team- or co-teaching arrangements in grades four through twelve general education classes. The student investigator used qualitative and quantitative sources

(e.g., interviews, classroom observations, teachers' weekly audiotaped co-planning meetings, Likert-type ratings instrument) to examine the results of the project. Although data analysis is ongoing, preliminary findings suggest major implications for LEA personnel in the planning and implementation of inclusive school or collaborative programs in which general and special educators team or co-teach. Additionally, the final results will impact preservice and inservice teacher trainers as they attempt to replicate the model in developing new collaborative or inclusive school programs or refining extant programs.

INTRODUCTION

An examination of the literature regarding collaborative teacher practices revealed that collaborative consultation models (e.g., Mckenzie et al., 1970; Idol, 1989) and programs that call for alternative instructional arrangements (e.g., co-teaching and team-teaching; Bauwens & Hourcade, 1991; Robinson, 1991) have been implemented for many years. In most cases, however, it appears that collaborative consultation models and programs have been implemented with no attempt to provide teachers with the organizational structure inherently needed to plan collaboratively for the successful implementation of appropriate instructional interventions that meet the needs students with learning disabilities.

Collaborative planning (also referred to a co-planning) is essential for successful implementation of collaborative teaching programs and arrangements (Gable, Hendrickson, Evans, Frye, & Brayant, 1993). The lack of research on co-planning, however, necessitated the development and evaluation of a structured model for joint teacher planning. Thus, the researcher investigated a model designed to facilitate teachers' co-planning and implementation of appropriate instructional interventions for students with learning disabilities in general education settings. In addition, the researcher investigated the effect of the co-planning model on the academic performance of students with learning disabilities as measured by the students' on-task classroom behaviors.

SUMMARY OF OVERALL PROJECT

The purpose of this project was to develop a structured co-planning model designed to facilitate planning between general education and special education teachers. Specifically, the co-planning model was designed to increase the effectiveness of teachers' joint planning

and implementation of appropriate educational services for students with learning disabilities in general education classrooms. The expected outcomes from this study follow:

(1) The proposed co-planning model will increase the number of instructional interventions generated and implemented by general and special education teachers for students with learning disabilities included in the general education classroom.

(2) The instructional interventions implemented as a result of the general and special educators' co-planning will increase the on-task classroom behavior of students with learning disabilities.

(3) The instructional interventions implemented as a result of the general and special educators' co-planning will increase the number of positive teacher- pupil interactions.

(4) The instructional interventions implemented as a result of the general and special educators' co-planning will increase the number of positive interactions among students with learning disabilities and their peers.

(5) The instructional interventions implemented as a result of the general and special educators' co-planning will increase the teachers' perceptions of positive academic achievement of students with learning disabilities.

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Although the data analysis for this project is ongoing, several critical procedural objectives were completed in the implementation and evaluation of this student initiated research project. The project addressed the following objectives:

1. Development of project instruments

   (a) The Co-Planning Form was designed to provide teachers with a structured framework from which to develop and organize instructional interventions for students with learning disabilities in general education classrooms (see Appendix A).

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(b) The Teachers' Perception of Planning Instrument (TPPI), a 25-item Likert-type instrument, was designed to determine teachers' perceptions regarding the impact of co-planning on their instructional interventions, instructional delivery, and instructional outcomes and student performance (see Appendix B).

2. Local Education Agency Support

(a) Two of four LEAs had teachers who met the criteria for participation in the study (i.e., special education and general education teachers who were involved in extant team- or co-teaching arrangements in general education classrooms.

(b) Twenty-eight teachers from two school systems participated in the study. The teachers participated in one of two groups: Group One - eight teacher-pairs (each pair consisted of one special educator and one general educator) who team- or co-taught students with learning disabilities as well as students without learning disabilities in general education classes; these teachers used the investigator-designed co-planning model. Group Two - six teacher-pairs (each pair consisted of one special educator and one general educator) who team- or co-taught students with learning disabilities as well as students without learning disabilities in general education classes; these teachers participated as the control group and did not use the co-plan model. In addition, 28 students with learning disabilities who received instruction from the teacher-pairs participated in the study.

3 Data Collection and Analysis

The student investigator used several methods of inquiry to collect data for this project:

(a) Pretest and posttest TPPIs,

(b) Weekly written lesson plans (i.e., using either the co-plan form or copies from teachers' traditional plan books),

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(c) Transcripts of teachers' weekly audiotaped co-plan meetings,

(d) Teacher Exit Interviews (i.e., transcripts of teacher interviews conducted at the end of the project),

(e) Classroom Observations of students' on-task behaviors (i.e., observations were conducted for 28 students with learning disabilities in general education classrooms; the student investigator conducted 42 classroom visits to collect observation data)

EVALUATION PLAN

The student investigator assumed responsibility for the initial evaluation of the project. Data analysis is ongoing, however, preliminary results of transcripts from teachers' exit interviews indicate that teachers who used the co-planning form reported that it facilitated their instructional planning. The student investigator will present the final results of the study in her dissertation.

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COLLABORATIVE CO-PLANNING FORM

Planning Partners Names _____

Class/Subject(s): _____ Today's Date _____ Beginning Planning Time : _____

Instructional Plan for Day(s): Mon. Tues. Wed. Thurs. Fri. End Planning Time: _____

Next Planning Session Date/Time: _____ / _____ : _____ A.M./ P.M. Week(s) of : _____

Location: _____

Goal # 1: _____

Goal # 2: _____

Goal # 3: _____

Goal # 4: _____

INSTRUCTION TIME	GOAL #	MATERIALS/ ACTIVITY	TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL ROLES / RESPONSIBILITIES	STUDENT ACTIVITY	ACCOMMODATION	FACTORS CONSIDERED	EVALUATION
						EASE OF USE _____ APPLICABILITY TO ALL STUDENTS _____ LINKS TO CURRICULUM _____ DIRECT INSTRUCTION OF SKILLS _____ USE IN GROUP INSTRUCTION _____ + MEETS CRITERIA O DOESN'T MEET CRITERIA	

Other Thoughts or Suggestions: _____

_____

_____

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Appendix B

TEACHER PERCEPTION OF PLANNING INSTRUMENT (TPPI)

DIRECTIONS

Reflect on your instructional planning practices and preferences and indicate below your response to the items. For each item, select the number that represents your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on the scale. The alternative responses are

1 Disagree Strongly	2 Disagree with reservations	3 Agree with reservations	4 Strongly Agree

1.	Writing lesson plans allows me to concentrate or focus on students' needs.	1 2 3 4
2.	Planning with others takes longer.	1 2 3 4
3.	My best instructional lessons are often not pre-planned.	1 2 3 4
4.	I have more ideas about how to teach a lesson when I write my plans.	1 2 3 4
5.	I am more productive planning alone than with others.	1 2 3 4
6.	Wrting out my instructional plans helps me to think of better ways to teach.	1 2 3 4
7.	My students do better when I write out my instructional plans.	1 2 3 4
8.	I have more ideas about how to teach a lesson when I plan with others.	1 2 3 4
9.	Planning with others has no effect on the way I deliver an instructional lesson.	1 2 3 4
10.	It seems to me that my students pay more attention when I have mentally planned a lesson, rather than when I have written the lesson on paper.	1 2 3 4
11.	Communication differences make planning with others difficult.	1 2 3 4
12.	I think that when I plan with others my instruction is better.	1 2 3 4
13.	My students pay closer attention in class when I have planned a lesson with someone else.	1 2 3 4
14.	I use more strategies to teach a lesson when I have planned a lesson with someone else.	1 2 3 4
15.	I instruct better when I write out my plans before teaching a lesson.	1 2 3 4
16.	It is not necessary to write out lesson plans.	1 2 3 4
17.	Writing lessons plans does not influence the way I teach.	1 2 3 4
18.	Philosophical differences in how to teach a subject makes planning with others difficult.	1 2 3 4
19.	I prefer to plan alone.	1 2 3 4
20.	My students learn better when I use a variety of instructional strategies to teach a lesson.	1 2 3 4

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1 Disagree Strongly	2 Disagree with reservations	3 Agree with reservations	4 Strongly Agree

21.	Compromising when planning with others may negatively impact my instruction.	1 2 3 4
22.	My instruction seems to be better when I have planned a lesson with someone else.	1 2 3 4
23.	The students are more receptive to instruction when I have planned a lesson with someone else.	1 2 3 4
24.	Writing my lesson plans have no effect on my instruction.	1 2 3 4
25.	Planning with another person has a positive affect on my students' learning.	1 2 3 4